

Message Text

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ORIGIN AGR-08

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(ISO) R

DRAFTED BY USDA:RBELL/EUR/SOV:MGARRISON:ML

APPROVED BY EB:JKATZ

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EB/ORF/OF - PDTAYLOR

USDA/FAS - D NOVOTNY

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P 060020Z AUG 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 185298

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: OTRA, UR, EAGR

SUBJECT: PRESS CONFERENCE WITH SPRING WHEAT TEAM

REF: MOSCOW 10535

1. DEPARTMENT AND USDA ARE IN AGREEMENT THAT SPRING WHEAT TEAM SHOULD NOT MEET PRESS OR GIVE BACKGROUND INTERVIEWS TO PRESS CORRESPONDENTS IN MOSCOW. TEAM SHOULD FOLLOW EARLIER ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING INFORMATION DEVELOPED BY TECHNICAL INFORMATION TEAMS VISITS WITH USSR, PARTICULARLY PREVIOUS WHEAT TEAMS. AS IN THE CASE OF THE RECENT WINTER WHEAT TEAM, AFTER DEBRIEFING OF TEAM BY USDA TECHNICIANS, USDA PLANS TO ISSUE IMMEDIATELY A PRESS RELEASE ON TEAM'S FINDINGS. THIS PROCEDURE WILL PERMIT BROADEST POSSIBLE COVERAGE OF TEAM'S FINDINGS IN US MEDIA. EQUALLY IMPORTANT IS OUR CONCERN THAT PRESS INTERVIEWS IN MOSCOW MIGHT PREJUDICE FUTURE EXCHANGES OF THIS TYPE UNDER THE US/USSR AGRICULTURAL AGREEMENT. JOURNALIST ON TEAM REPRESENTS A TRADE PUBLICATION AND IS OPERATING AS MEMBER OF TEAM

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AND NOT IN CAPACITY OF JOURNALIST.

2. DEPARTMENT RECOGNIZES PROBLEMS THAT DECISION WILL CAUSE FOR EMBASSY'S RELATIONS WITH RESIDENT US CORRESPONDENTS.

IN INFORMING THEM THAT BRIEFING WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE, YOU COULD POINT OUT THAT RAW INFORMATION GATHERED BY SPRING WHEAT TEAM WILL HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT OF OTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE IN WASHINGTON BEFORE MEANINGFUL ASSESSMENT CAN BE MADE.

3. IF EMBASSY BELIEVES DESIRABLE, HOWEVER, AMBASSADOR, DCM OR AG ATTACHE COULD INFORM US JOURNALISTS ON BACKGROUND ABOUT TEAM'S ABILITY TO SEE WHAT IT WANTED TO SEE, PROVIDE SOME DETAILS ABOUT SPECIFIC THINGS SEEN (WITHOUT GIVING JOURNALISTS A PEG FOR GUESSING ABOUT THE CROP), AND GIVE ABOVE EXPLANATION WHY TEAM ITSELF CANNOT GIVE A BRIEFING. KISSINGER

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